

President's Corner SOS: Support Our Sanctuaries

by Mark Johnson

It wasn't until I was an undergraduate at then Towson State University that I became aware of the MOS sanctuaries. It was a Biology Club outing to Carey Run in Western Maryland. This was a great place to stay the night while we birded the property and other unique habitats in the region. We called in Barred Owls at the property, had calling nighthawks flying over, and warblers were everywhere. It was a great weekend. Another weekend trip, to Irish Grove in late April, was simply incredible! When I arrived around 10 PM, the group was out on the marsh road at Rumbly Point, listening to Clapper, Sora, and Virginia Rails under an amazing starlit sky. That weekend, in addition to birding the property, we birded nearby Chincoteague and logged in more than 100 species. These experiences, along with many others I have enjoyed at these sanctuaries since then, are now valuable memories that will stay with me for a lifetime. To me, this is what life is all about.

As president, I try to keep abreast of the many aspects and functions of our organization, sanctuaries among them. Brent Byers and before him Dottie Mumford have done an excellent job keeping up those two properties, in particular, since they are now the only ones with facilities. Upkeep is not easy, and each year volunteers participate as part of scheduled "work days" to help maintain the structures and the grounds.

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The Maryland Yellowthroat

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THE NEWEST MOS SANCTUARY: PISCATAWAY

Thanks to the generosity of a real estate developer, MOS has acquired an 85-acre tract of land in southern Prince George's County. This, the latest in our system of fine sanctuaries for birds and other wildlife, is located near the village of Piscataway; the best access is at the end of Gardner Road, which runs north off Route 373, Accokeek Road. (It is possible to park right there by the chain or drive in a little farther [100 feet]] and park by a grassy patch.)

The property is completely wooded with large second-growth forest. Two small streams cross the sanctuary as they flow through verdant valleys, and there is a small wetland in one of the valleys. An old lane runs the length of the land, providing easy walking. A side trail crosses the two streams and leads to another lane, which leads to Danville Road.

Surveying this area for the Atlas project, I recorded 57 species of birds, including several species of warbler, Wild Turkeys, and Scarlet Tanagers. I also saw evidence of deer, gray squirrels, raccoons, rabbits, and possibly opossum. I photographed box turtles and a large black snake. Wildflowers can be found during the warm seasons.

PISCATAWAY SANCTUARY



A WILDLIFE SANCTUARY MAINTAINED BY
THE MARYLAND ORNITHOLOGICAL SOCIETY

This sign erected in memory of Bill Kulp, Past-President of the
Montgomery Bird Club, and the many M.O.S. volunteers who
have created other sanctuaries in Maryland.

There are plans to erect a shelter. Metal signs will be posted in memory of Montgomery County Bird Club Past President Bill Kulp, who was strongly interested in this sanctuary and whose bequest is being used for the signs and other improvements, as well as of the many MOS volunteers whose labors maintain the sanctuary program.

— Don Messersmith
MOS Historian

MARK THE DATES:

Irish Grove Sanctuary Work
Weekend: March 31–April 1.
For details, contact Brent Byers,
baypuffin@hotmail.com.

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This is also quite expensive, and over the years many past members have bequeathed funds specifically for this purpose. Still, it is difficult to keep up given the age of the structures. The roof at Irish Grove needs replacement. Beds are old, and there is evidence of rodent use. Bathrooms at Carey Run need to be upgraded to be sanitary. The list goes on.

Use of these sanctuaries has dwindled with the years, and I can only think that if the properties were improved and renovated to make them more maintenance-free, their use would increase. In the past, proposals have been made to raze the existing, dated structures and replace them with simple, more useable, lower-maintenance ones. Doing so raises issues that we are beginning to explore. Another possibility is large-scale renovation. Although I am handy with tools, this is beyond my level of proficiency. Therefore, if you are interested in this topic and have ideas or are willing to help, please let me or Sanctuary Chair Bent Byers know. Hopefully, with your help, we can improve these sanctuaries to the point where they will serve as a setting where others can forge memories that will last a lifetime.

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Anyone is welcome to contribute articles, photos, or ideas that would be of interest to other birders. Copy may be mailed or e-mailed to Lydia Schindler by March 20, 2012 for the May/June 2012 issue.

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Announcing...

THE 2012 YMOS BIRDATHON

BY GEORGE RADCLIFFE AND WAYNE BELL



As we write this in early January it seems as though the dead of winter has yet to dominate the Maryland landscape. It is hard to believe that nearly a year has passed since the last Birdathon for the MOS Youth Program (YMOS). As you read this in early March, the 2012 YMOS Birdathon will be hard upon us.

The dates are Saturday and Sunday, March 17 and 18.

YMOS has grown slowly but satisfyingly. Even though some advanced birders have graduated and left the nest, an enthusiastic corps of entering middle school “novices” and seasoned high school “veterans” is taking charge. This corps has already commenced training for competition in the World Series of Birding (WSB) on May 12 at Cape May, NJ. Aspiring young birders have joined YMOS from Charles, Harford, and Baltimore Counties and from the upper Eastern Shore. They are excited by the possibility of representing the MOS with two competitive WSB youth teams this May. Their success depends on their ability to gain experience and become the best junior birders possible. It also depends on their ability to raise funding support through the 2012 YMOS Birdathon.

This is not a typical fund-raiser with a goal of racking up a large species list. True, the junior birders must see and identify as many species as possible over two days within the geographical limits of Maryland's Eastern Shore. The adult coaches (ourselves and parent drivers) are allowed only to confirm the youngsters' identifications. The twist is that they agree ahead of time on a “Must-See” list of 100 species. Every species missed on this list must be made up by seeing two additional species, one to replace the missed species and one as a penalty. Supporters pledge 25 or 50 or 75 cents or a dollar per species (after correcting for the missed must-sees and the penalty). This raises the bar as well as the fun, making the second day a serious pursuit of targeted must-see species which, in a very real sense, count double toward raising their net Birdathon total.

Four highly competent young birders participated in the YMOS Birdathon last year. The fine weather was offset by the fact that many wintering waterfowl departed early. By the end of Day 1 the group had racked up 104 species but the lack of waterfowl resulted in their identifying only 76 must-see's. Day 2 began effectively around 20 species in the hole—and the deficit would have to be erased largely with song birds! The gang caucused and agreed to some excellent targeting priorities, which heavily depended on access to productive bird feeders in Dorchester and Talbot Counties. Some wonderfully accommodating local MOS members responded. At the end of the day the participants had cut the must-see misses to just 11 and achieved a grand total of 121 species counted. After deducting the 11 penalty points the net total for fun-raising purposes was 110. That translated into a total of \$2,000 in pledges, the best total in the three-year history of the Birdathon. What a day!

The YMOS is now developing the 2012 Must-See list. By rule, it must contain all 11 species missed last year except Northern Bobwhite, Yellow-bellied Sapsucker, and Ruby-crowned Kinglet. These species were missed three years in a row and now retire as “nemesis species” for at least a year, to be replaced by the second-year nemesis candidates Willet, Gray Catbird, and Saltmarsh Sparrow. A copy of the complete Must-See list will be sent to all who pledge their support for the 2012 YMOS Birdathon.

YMOS field training in preparation for the 2012 WSB thus far has consisted of day trips to Cape May, NJ, and Chincoteague National Wildlife Refuge, VA, and

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Birds of Note – by Les Roslund

- Birding in Maryland in December and January usually requires dealing with severe weather. That has not been the case this year. Instead, most days have lent well to the chasing of rare or unusual species. One of the most chased species of the season was a **BLACK-HEADED GULL** that started frequenting the parking lot of Best Buy in the Hunt Valley Mall in Baltimore County on Dec 9. Russ Ruffing of Woodstock was the first to spot and report this bird. Russ noticed it as a smaller bird amongst some 25 **RING-BILLED GULLS**, and made the identification despite having no binocs along during his lunch-time stop at the mall. The bird was a beautiful winter adult in perfect plumage, and it was fully adapted to the easy life of hitting up humans for food in parking lots. From first sighting until the present writing this bird has quite reliably been present, providing great looks and splendid photos for nearly all the bird chasers of the region. It should be noted that the Hunt Valley Mall is not far from Paper Mill Flats, where Debby Terry and Keith Costley sighted a **BLACK-HEADED GULL** way back on Nov 6. It is reasonable to suspect that the Paper Mill Flats bird merely shifted to the mall where it attained fame, fortune, easy food, and the appreciation of numerous happy birders.
- Another black-headed bird was discovered during the Caroline County Christmas Count in Denton on Dec 17. Bill Miller of downtown Denton had noticed a strange bird at his feeder, so he invited Steve Westre of Denton to stop by and see what it was. Steve and Mike Price watched the feeder the next day and found the bird to be a **BLACK-HEADED GROSBEAK**. Careful study of the photographs revealed that it was a first winter male. This species nests in the western part of the nation but occasionally winters in the Midwest or even the East. Though there have been many prior records of **BLACK-HEADED GROSBEAK** in adjacent states, this was the first chasable one in Maryland since the early 1960s. This bird returned reliably to the feeder for several days; then its visits became intermittent. The last sighting was on Dec 25, when the bird was seen in a nearby tree but not at the feeder.
- The most recent bird to generate great excitement in the birding community is a **BARNACLE GOOSE**. Early on the morning of Jan 9, Maren Gimpel and Dan Small of Chestertown, viewing from Chino Farms, discovered the goose roosting on the Chester River. Later in the morning the bird moved from the river to a field near the intersection of Rte 291 and Buckingham Road. Word of the sighting spread rapidly, and great numbers of birders began sharing a daily ritual of searching the region to relocate the bird. Relocating was often difficult since the



Levin Willey spotted this Western Kingbird on December 25, at the Hurlock Waste Water Treatment Plant in Dorchester County. Photo by Bill Hubick.

- bird usually was hidden within large flocks of **CANADA GEESE**. Many searchers were successful, though often only at very long range. As of Jan 18 the bird was still being found, photographed, and enjoyed by birders from Maryland and adjacent states. The level of excitement over this particular **BARNACLE GOOSE** was boosted by the fact that the species recently gained acceptance onto the list of Maryland birds. Sightings in MD will be reviewed by the records committee and, if accepted, the species can be added to the life list of each observer.
- In our region birders can find **HORNED GREBES** quite readily, but **EARED GREBES** are not nearly as abundant. This winter only one has been reported. Mikey and Jo Anna Lutmerding of Croom, MD spotted one on Dec 3, foraging actively on the Potomac side of Point Lookout State Park in St. Mary's County. Surely other birders tried to relocate this bird, but no additional reports of success were filed.
 - 2011 was certainly a great year for **DICKCISSELS** in the region, and one last bird continued to put on a show in DC until Dec 14. Back on Nov 26 two **DICKCISSELS** at Hain's Point were reported by Stephen Jones of Montgomery County. Stephen found the two to be quite cooperative while feeding on the ground amongst a mixed flock of sparrows. On Dec 5 Patricia Wood relocated one **DICKCISSEL** at the same location and the next day Jason Berry successfully added the species to his DC Big Year list. Several more sightings were reported over the next few days, with the last one coming on Dec 14.
 - Perhaps due to the winter being so mild, a **SNOWY EGRET** was recorded at Chesapeake Bay Environmental Center in Queen Anne's County in mid-December of 2011 and also in early January of 2012. Rob Ostrowski of Crofton reported seeing this bird on Dec 11 and Danny Poet of Queenstown saw it again on Jan 8. Since the water remained open in this area through that time period, it is reasonable to suspect that the bird was still in the region even though there were no additional reports.

We are pleased to announce that two talented MOS members, **Richard Donham** of Cecil County and **Eric Skrzypczak** of Montgomery County, have agreed to take over production of *The Maryland Yellowthroat* beginning with the September issue.

MEET OUR NEW YELLOWTHROAT EDITOR, RICHARD DONHAM

As a child, I wandered alone or with fellow urchins in the fields and in the scrub along the Arkansas River bottomland near my home in south-central Kansas. My first acquisition that I remember having to save money for was a pair of \$15 binoculars (this was about 1957—I am a geezer!). Binoculars opened new vistas, and armed with that modest equipment and peanut butter sandwiches, I was able to explore, often for hours, without appreciating the delicious luxury of unsupervised play and self-discovery.

Fortunately, I had to figure out how to make a living, so I went to school at Kansas State University and then the University of Washington (Seattle) and managed to collect several degrees in zoology, studying the physiology, migration, and reproduction in White-crowned Sparrows and Mallards. All the while I was trying to find as much time as I could to get into the field and look at birds. For example, about 1978, the now defunct Eastern Airlines had a special promotion that allowed several poor biology graduate students to fly from Seattle to the end of their route and back for about \$200. The end of their route turned out to be Venezuela, and introduced me to birding in the tropics.

Academe turned out to be the perfect life. The only down side was that I had to teach undergraduates, which was not natural for me, but with practice, I became a little better (or at least more aware of my failures in this regard), and this eventually led me to the University of Delaware in 1982. At Delaware, I met and married my wife Deborah and we settled into life in the biology department. For the last 15 years, I was part of the University's outreach effort to help K-12 teachers become more effective science teachers by providing professional development workshops on teaching student-centered, investigatory science teaching. This also required me to write about these issues in the K-12 and college settings.

During this time I continued my birding activities through the Cecil Bird Club and occasional trips abroad with Deb to Scotland, Iceland, Peru, South Africa, Mexico, Panama, Costa Rica, and the Galapagos. I am not much of a lister, but I love the discovery of a new species and the sights and tastes of new places. Now that I am retired (summer of 2011), I am hoping to continue these vagabond ways, and to also bird more in Maryland, since every day is Saturday.

MEET OUR NEW YELLOWTHROAT DESIGNER, ERIC SKRZYPCHAK

About 10 years ago digital cameras reinvigorated my interest in photography. I wanted to photograph bears, raccoons, and foxes, but most of the time all I saw were birds. Eventually I took a few shots in order to have a photograph to take home. I never knew what I was photographing, so I had to ask “nice people who held binoculars.” Early on I got some praise for my photographs, which was nice because at the time I failed to realize that they were horrible.

Eventually I was bitten by the challenge of capturing an image of a subject in almost perpetual motion. Birds rarely sit still and almost never allow you to get close to them. I believe that bird photographers have a special type of birding insanity. Viewing birds can be tough, but capturing a quality photograph can be even more challenging. Over time, my photography got better, and I learned to recognize the birds. Now I am the person identifying a lot of species for others.

My photographs have been published in *Birder's World*, *Virginia Wildlife Magazine*, and the recent MOS breeding bird *Atlas*. (You can view many of my photographs on my web site, wildlifehobbies.com.) On a field trip I often take 1,000 photographs a day and keep 75 or fewer. This year at Magee Marsh in Ohio one birder asked me why I was taking about 300 shots of a single bird; she felt that I had a photo and could move on. It was hard to explain that I would be lucky if one shot wound up looking like what I saw in my mind.

I began my career working as an electronics technician on submarines in the United States Navy. After the Navy I pursued undergraduate and graduate degrees in Corporate Training. In my professional life I am a technical instructor, a job that allows me to travel all over the world. I have taught a variety of hardware and software solutions, both commercial and military grade. In the last two years I have logged approximately 200,000 actual air miles. My favorite destination is Australia. I enjoy working with computers and creating publications in a variety of formats, including web, video, and desktop publishing.

My last name is pronounced *Skip Zak*. Please call me Eric.



The Superb Fairy Wren of Australia, one of Eric's favorite photos.

MARYLAND'S TIDAL MARSH BIRD SURVEY: RESULTS FROM THE FIRST SEASON

BY DAVID CURSON, DIRECTOR OF BIRD CONSERVATION, AUDUBON MARYLAND-DC

WHITNEY WIEST, PhD CANDIDATE, DEPARTMENT OF ENTOMOLOGY AND WILDLIFE ECOLOGY, UNIVERSITY OF DELAWARE

Between April and July 2011, teams of trained observers headed out into Maryland's vast tidal marshes by boat, by road, and on foot, to count birds for the state's most comprehensive survey of tidal marsh birds to date. The survey is part of a northeast regional collaboration between the Universities of Delaware, Connecticut, and Maine, state wildlife agencies, and the National Audubon Society. Known as the Saltmarsh Habitat and Avian Research Program, or SHARP, the survey is funded by a grant from the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service. Its goal is to identify the most important areas for tidal marsh birds along the coast from Maine to Virginia, and to determine which bird species and locations are most in need of conservation action.

In Maryland, the survey is being implemented over two years by researchers at University of Delaware and Audubon Maryland-DC. The first year of survey work was a great success. Audubon's Important Bird Areas Coordinator David Yeany II and two other experienced ornithologists, Matt Buckingham from Texas and Maryland birder Matt Tillett, managed to visit 207 randomly selected points on Maryland's lower Eastern Shore and complete point count surveys for birds three times at each.

So what do the survey results tell us? The totals for each salt marsh specialist bird species in each of the four counties covered (Table 1) reveal some interesting patterns. Saltmarsh Sparrows and Willets were most abundant in Worcester County, where the salty, ocean-derived waters of the Maryland Coastal Bays give rise to salt marshes dominated by meadows of short *Spartina* grasses. The brackish waters of the Chesapeake Bay produce a more varied marsh habitat, where black needlerush and Olney threesquare dominate alongside *Spartina* grasses. Clapper Rail and Black Duck reached their highest populations in these brackish marshes. Clapper Rails prefer needlerush marshes and were most abundant in Somerset County, and Black Ducks were most abundant in Dorchester County, where they showed an apparent preference for threesquare marshes.

Seaside Sparrows do well in grass-dominated marshes and also in needlerush and were the most abundant salt marsh bird in all counties. Overall, Seaside Sparrows outnumbered Saltmarsh Sparrows by 10 to 1. The Black Rail is currently a species of high conservation concern due to declining



Clapper Rail, a specialist of salt marshes, glows in early morning light. Photo taken by Matt Tillett.

populations, and in 2007 it was listed as Endangered by the state of Maryland. So it was pleasing that the survey showed Black Rails to still be present, mostly in Dorchester County.

The results of the survey are helping conservation efforts at the local level as well as at the regional scale. Audubon Maryland-DC is using the data to target marsh restoration on the most important habitat for salt marsh birds as

part of its project to plan for sea level rise in the Dorchester County tidal marshes. In 2012, the tidal marsh bird survey will be repeated throughout the SHARP region, including Maryland, to provide a crucial measure of variability between years, and Audubon has requested a small grant from MOS to assist with the 2012 survey.

The success of the 2011 tidal marsh bird survey in Maryland was made possible by an impressive array of partners whom we would like to thank. The U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service funded the project and also provided a field vehicle, and the Maryland Department of Natural Resources administered the USFWS grant and provided boat and trailer and boat training. Housing for the field crew was provided by Blackwater National Wildlife Refuge and MOS (at Irish Grove). Volunteers from the Friends of Blackwater helped transport the field crew to count points. Additional funding was donated by Chesapeake Audubon Society, the Audubon Society of Central Maryland, and donors to Audubon's Birdathon 2011.

For more information on the 2011 tidal marsh bird survey visit the Audubon Maryland-DC website at <http://mddc.audubon.org> or the SHARP web site at <http://www.tidalmarshbirds.org/>.

County	# Points surveyed	Black Duck	Black Rail	Clapper Rail	Saltmarsh Sparrow	Seaside Sparrow	Coastal Plain Swamp Sparrow	Willet
Dorchester	74	85	4	48	43	359	40	75
Somerset	55	49	2	130	16	308	3	105
Wicomico	6	3	--	3	--	2	--	--
Worcester	72	30	--	92	126	375	2	365
Total	207	167	6	273	185	1044	45	545

Table 1. Summary of salt marsh bird detections (sum of maximum count from each point) by county, at 207 points on Maryland's lower Eastern Shore in 2011.



ANNE ARUNDEL COUNTY

Kathie Lambert reports on another whirlwind weekend. "The possibility of a three-crane day was too much to resist. I planned a quick trip to Birchwood, TN on the weekend of their annual Crane Festival. Who knew cranes were such a big deal in Tennessee?"

"It's about an 11-hour drive from MD to TN. Arrived at the Hiwassee refuge Friday afternoon. Sadly, the Hooded Crane was not there amongst the thousands of Sandhill Cranes, and it had only been seen briefly by one person early in the day. I was up well before dawn on Saturday and had to park at the local elementary school and take a shuttle into the refuge, as this was the deal for the Crane Festival. Was the first person on the shuttle. Arrived at the refuge to find a few birders already there; they had arrived before the refuge personnel shut the gate to all but the shuttles. It was still dark, but we were setting up our scopes. Eventually, the sun rose on the refuge. It was very cold, steam rising from the water. We found lots of other birds, but the sandhills had not yet arrived from their roost. Over the next couple of hours, sandhills arrived in dribs and drabs. We picked through each group looking for the Hooded Crane. Eventually someone yelled, 'There it is!' as it flew in with a flock. It was easy to pick out the black crane among the gray ones. Fortunately, it landed in an area with good light and stayed in view for most of the day, much to the delight of the huge crowd of festival participants and birders from around the country. Unfortunately, the birds were at least a half-mile away, so no pictures. Eventually a few of us took the shuttle

to another part of the refuge, where four Whooping Cranes had been spotted. They were well over a mile away and barely identifiable until they decided to fly upriver. After takeoff, there was no mistaking the fact that they were Whooping Cranes. There were lots of other good birds on the trip. This part of Tennessee is lovely. May have to take a longer trip there. After a detour to Huntsville, AL to visit an old high school pal, I drove home on Sunday. I must be nuts."

—Kathie Lambert

CAROLINE COUNTY

A first-winter male Black-headed Grosbeak visited *Bill Miller's* yard, Market Street, Denton, for several days beginning December 19. A first for Caroline County, well documented by top birders from around the state! Birders were able to view the bird in Mr. Miller's yard from the sidewalk on Market, so no temptation to trespass. It made the local *Times Record* and was shared via e-mail by other local entities, such as Downtown Denton Mainstreet. The manner in which MOS members reported the bird and handled themselves when they came to find the bird was stellar. As a result, the Town of Denton saw this as a positive, bringing in visitors who may have stopped for gas or something to eat or visited nearby areas such as Crouse Park. Our compliments to *Steve Westre* and all the others who reported the bird and advised others on where to go, where to park, and how to be respectful of the property's owner.

—Debby Bennett

CARROLL COUNTY

Maureen and *Dave Harvey* (like Kathie Lambert, above) enjoyed a crane chase to Tennessee. "We left Monday and got to Hiwassee about 5:30 in the evening. The Hooded Crane had been seen at 3:40 that afternoon. We watched Sandhill Cranes coming in to the slough for the night and then went and found a hotel in Cleveland. We were back the next morning, very cold and very windy. We were there from 8 AM until 6:30 PM, but this was the first day the bird had not been seen since it was discovered.

"We then went to visit Maureen's cousin and uncle in Georgia. Since Wednesday was still very cold we decided to spend the day visiting with the relatives and did not go back to Hiwassee. When we checked the Internet, we found that the bird had been seen that day about noon, so we decided to return the next day.

"We birded Booker T. Washington State Park early in the morning and got to Hiwassee about 9 AM. The day started cold but turned into a beautiful day. There were many people coming and going throughout the day, many of whom said they had never seen a Whooping Crane—so if anyone was to see one, please let them know. About 2:55 PM Dave found an immature Whooper and called it out, then turned the scope over to Maureen. While she was looking at the whooper, she noticed a different-looking bird nearby. She told everyone she thought she had the Hooded. Dave took the scope back and confirmed that she was correct. The bird was at the back of the slough at the corner where you can see part of the river beyond it. We watched the bird for about 40 minutes before we finally headed back to Maryland."

—Dave Harvey

HOWARD COUNTY

In late October a Green Violetear visited the feeder of *Diane LaPoma* in Columbia. Ms. LaPoma took photos of the bird to her local bird supplies store and the word was soon out. About 70 people saw the bird, birders from as far away as New York and North Carolina, as well as MOS members. To show our appreciation, members of the Howard County chapter presented Ms. LaPoma with a lovely photo of the bird, a certificate of appreciation, and a signed copy of David Sibley's guide. It should also be noted that Ms. LaPoma's daughter was selling Girl Scout cookies and many birders became customers—a small example of how birders support the local economy.

—Kate Tufts

MONTGOMERY COUNTY

An unnamed friend reports that *Jared Fisher* has just completed a superbly successful Montgomery County big year, ending up with 225 species—and he got married, to boot! Asked to confirm his accomplishment, Jared would only say: “It was an amazing year for rarities in the county, with a staggering 247 species recorded during the year. Biggest highlights for me included seeing both Mississippi Kite and Purple Gallinule at Hughes Hollow in May and finding a Northern Shrike at Green Hills Farm wetland [west of Laytonsville] in late October.” Jared’s total of 225 represents one of the highest totals since the early ’90s.

Mike Bowen called our attention to an article in the *Monocacy Monocle*, the local biweekly newspaper in Poolesville, announcing the retirement of Western Montgomery’s premier vet—*Dr. Chet (“The Vet”) Anderson*. “Chet has been a member of the Montgomery Bird Club for years and has been a stalwart participant in the Seneca and Sugarloaf CBCs for almost as long as I have. I’ve made contacts with many local landowners over the years by casually dropping Chet’s name. Absolutely everyone out there knows him, but probably not as a birder.” The article made no mention of his retiring from birding, we’re happy to note.

Gail Joice writes of birding in Patagonia: “I flew to Argentina in early December to join my ex-pat daughter for a week of hiking and birding in the southernmost part of Patagonia. We started in El Calafate, a small gateway town to the Argentine Los Glaciares National Park. The birding hotspot is the Reserva Natural Laguna Nimez, which encompasses two lagoons surrounded by grass, scrub brush, and dunes at the edge of milky-turquoise Lago Argentina. My extensive bird list from here includes Southern Lapwing, Upland Goose, Long-tailed Meadowlark, and Cinereous Harrier. I had hoped for my first Chilean flamingos on this trip, and was thrilled to be able to see their

pink dots against the Nimez lagoon from our plane window as we banked into the airport.

“We went immediately to the refuge to observe the flamingos feeding in the lagoon. The adults were a rich shrimp pink with brilliant hot-pink tail feathers, and a single juvenile stood out with his chalky white body feathers hiding a flash of a hot pink beginning to form at his tail. After the richness of the Refuge at El Calafate, we moved on to the mountain-climbing mecca of El Chalten, which sits at the base of the famous Patagonian Fitz-Roy Range. We were thrilled to see ostrich-like Lesser Rhea in the dry steppes on the bus ride between Calafate and El Chalten, and the heart-thrill of the trip for me was finding Andean Condors soaring over the cliffs at El Chalten. Their 9-foot wing spans and ermine ruff collars were unmistakable. On one hike we witnessed a condor being harassed by a large Black-chested Buzzard Eagle. The condor cruised ahead unperturbed, as if the big eagle were just a pesky crow. The grand finale in the southern beechwood forest above El Chalten was a male Magellanic Woodpecker, as plump as a large chicken, banging away with his bright crested head on a tree next to the trail for almost 30 minutes. Two German birders and I were transfixed! Patagonia birding is sublimely unforgettable!”

Gail Mackiernan reports that she and *Barry Cooper*, along with three friends, spent 24 days in Ecuador this past October/November. Their trip concentrated on the less-visited south, with 18 days at several Jocotoco Foundation lodges, as well as stays at Copalinga and Yankuam Lodges. Highlights included the ultra-rare Long-wattled Umbrellabird and Orange-throated Tanager, as well as arm’s-length views of a number of antpittas such as Undulated and the jazzy Jocotoco. Five days in the north (both east and west of the Andes) yielded more antpittas (for a total of 12 species on the trip), as well as mind-blowing views of a habituated Ocellated Tapaculo at Angel Paz’s

finca, Paz de las Aves. An astonishing 75 species of hummingbird included such gems as Sword-billed and Rainbow Starfrontlet. “All in all, we saw more than 600 species. However, the greatest surprise was a mammal—a puma standing in full view on the side of a mountain road: a first for everyone in the van, including the guide!”

—*Chris Wright*

TRI-COUNTY

Several members of Tri-County Bird Club joined *Doug* and *Sally Ruby* on a bird trip they led to the San Diego area under the auspices of Camp Swatara. There were 13 of us, including members *Chris Dominick*, *Mike Walsh*, *Ceil* and *Pete Zerhusen*, and *Carol Broderick*. The Rubys, the most organized and researched leaders possible, were able to produce just about all the target birds. We travelled from the coastal area at Pt. Loma to the desert area at Anzo-Borrego State Park, from the Salton Sea (missed the Yellow-footed Gull) to Joshua Tree National Park, from the San Bernardino Mtns (where fires broke out the next day) to the grasslands. These areas produced hundreds of Western Grebes, California and Gambel’s Quails, two White-tailed Kites, a Snowy Plover, Mountain Plovers, numerous Acorn and Nuttall’s Woodpeckers, and a spiraling Sprague’s Pipit. We had Red-tailed Hawks every day, but everyone’s favorite hawk was a 10-minute look at a Ferruginous Hawk. Of course, four California Condors performed for Doug and Sally, too. After this full meal, the dessert was a boat trip to Santa Cruz Island for the Island Scrub Jay. On the sail over and back, 3,000 gray dolphins and 2 gray whales entertained us. Of course, the jays showed up for Doug and Sally in good numbers.

“As we all know, though, not everything goes perfectly, even for the Rubys. There were the lost car keys (never found) and the flat tire on the way to the boat, just to prove that life isn’t perfect.”

—*Carol Broderick*

SUCCESS BUILDS IN SECOND YEAR OF HERPS ATLAS

BY GLENN THERRES

The five-year herp atlas project, officially known as the Maryland Amphibian and Reptile Atlas (MARA), just completed its second year of statewide data collection, and the results to date are impressive. More than 11,800 records of reptiles and amphibians have been entered into the central database. These records were collected by 675 volunteers (along with several DNR employees), who spent nearly 10,000 hours afield during the first two years of the project.

Of the 90 species of reptiles and amphibians (turtles, lizards, snakes, salamanders and newts, and frogs and toads) known to occur in Maryland, we have documented all but six. Of those, two are sea turtles and the other four are rare Garrett County species. The most common species is spring peeper with 836 records, followed by the northern green frog with 762 records. (Being vocal, frogs are easier to detect than other herps.) The most common reptile is eastern box turtle with 561 records; painted turtle is close behind at 554. Unfortunately, a few exotic species have been found as well, including alligator snapping turtle and boa constrictor.

Like the two breeding bird atlases, MARA uses a grid system of topographic quads divided into six blocks—in Maryland, 247 quads and 1,301 land blocks. (Several blocks that are all water are not being counted, though a few herps [such as snapping turtles and northern watersnakes] may be reported from those.) MARA's goal is to document at least 10 species in every block and 25 species in every quad.

Through the first two years, data has been collected in all but 11 quads. The one with the most species to date is the Bristol quad in Anne Arundel County; this area, which includes Jug Bay Wetland Sanctuary, has 43 species. At least one reptile or amphibian has been recorded in 985 blocks, which is more than 80 percent of the blocks in the state. Many blocks already have 5-10 species, and 477 blocks have 10 or more species.

Coverage is very good in many areas of the state, but not all. Help is especially needed in western Maryland and the Eastern Shore, where the pool of volunteers is sparse. We could also use help in some of the metropolitan areas such as Baltimore, Prince George's, and Montgomery counties.



A green tree frog poses for George Jett.

If you are interested in becoming an active herp atlaser, there are a few ways to get involved. If you are really interested in going afield regularly to look for reptiles and amphibians, I suggest contacting the county coordinator for the county where you would like to work. As with the bird atlases, there is a coordinator for each of Maryland's 23 counties. You can find a list of our coordinators and their contact information on the MARA web site at <http://marylandnature.org/mara/>.

The MARA web site also provides lots of other useful information to help get you involved. Even if you are not interested in going afield specifically to look for reptiles and amphibians, chances are pretty good that you will come across some herps while birding. We could use those observations, too. We call those incidental records and encourage you to send them along to us. An e-mail to the statewide coordinator Heather Cunningham (hcunningham@marylandnature.org) or myself (gtherres@dnr.state.md.us) will work. At a minimum we will need the species and location where it was found. We encourage a photo, if possible. About 20 percent of our records thus far are incidental ones. They all count.



The white markings on this marbled salamander indicate it is a male; markings on females are gray. Photo by George Jett.

Some of the best finds of the MARA project have come from birders. Bill Hubick and friends found the only mountain earthsnakes thus far; this is a state endangered species found only in Garrett County. George Jett and his colleagues in Charles County have found at least one rainbow snake, another state endangered species. Data collected during the MOS conference in Garrett County last year was added to the MARA database. Lynn Davidson, Kyle Rambo, David Smith, June Tveekrem, Dave Walbeck, Ron Gutberlet, Jim Rapp, and Dave Wilson are all birders who are now MARA county coordinators. We could use your help, too.

We are always on the lookout for volunteers and for herp records, and outreach is an integral part of our project. In addition to the MARA web site, we produce a monthly newsletter that goes out by e-mail to volunteers via the county coordinators. (It is posted on the web site, too.) We also have a Facebook page: Maryland Amphibian & Reptile Atlas. Check it out! You might like it.

Reptiles and amphibians are already on the move, so the atlas field season is NOW. We could sure use your help. At a minimum, please send me, Heather, or your county coordinator an e-mail reporting that reptile or amphibian you saw while birding. After all, reptiles are just primitive birds.

MOS ANNOUNCES 2012 SCHOLARSHIP WINNERS

MOS is awarding scholarships to five teachers and nature center staff to attend one-week nature programs at the Hog Island sanctuary in Maine this coming summer. Operated by National Audubon, these programs focus on environmental education, developing ornithological skills, or assisting with research projects.

In keeping with recent history, the workshop **Sharing Nature: An Educator's Week** was again the most popular program. This is a relatively new workshop designed specifically for environmental educators. **Jessica Beebe** received the *Daniel and Helen Gibson-Dorothy Mendinball Scholarship*. She is an AmeriCorps Volunteer, currently serving at the Ward Museum of Wildfowl Art as a youth educator, and was a seasonal naturalist and program coordinator at Pocomoke River State Park in Snow Hill for several seasons. The *Chandler Robbins Scholarship* was awarded to **Erin Reed**, who recently joined the Patterson Park Audubon Center in Baltimore as an educator conducting natural history and life science lessons and activities for urban students. The *Eleanor Robbins Scholarship* recipient,

Elizabeth Kopf, currently teaches high school studio art at Roland Park Country School, Baltimore, and is looking for ways to incorporate interdisciplinary lessons into her curriculum, especially since her school is starting a research apprenticeship for girls in grades 9-11 interested in science.

The **Field Ornithology** workshop was selected by **Susan Steele**, a ninth grade science teacher for Baltimore County Public Schools' Crossroads Center, which fosters a unique learning environment for at-risk students who require additional assistance in the area of academics and social and emotional skills. She was awarded the *Orville Crowder-Donald Messersmith Scholarship*.

Sophie Gerard received the *Helen Miller Scholarship* to attend the **Maine Seabird Biology and Conservation** program. Sophie is responsible for teaching preschool-age children using a nature-based curriculum at the Irvine Nature Center in Owings Mills.

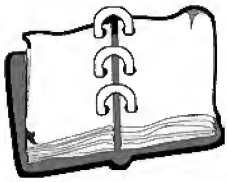
Congratulations to all of the 2012 recipients!

—Tom Strikwerda
Chair, Scholarship Committee

YMOB Birdathon *continued from page 2*

participation in the St. Michaels Christmas Bird Count. A full schedule is planned for spring, beginning with the Dorchester County version of the Great Backyard Bird Count in February and ending with a spring migrant search on the upper Western Shore (Cecil, Harford, and Baltimore counties) in late April. All results are compiled and posted to eBird as a contribution to this outstanding international citizen science data base.

The YMOB must augment its budget allocation with additional funds in order to meet WSB and other program expenses. Please e-mail your per (net) species pledge of \$0.25, \$0.50, \$0.75, or \$1.00 to either George Radcliffe (radclifg@gmail.com) or Wayne Bell (wbell2@washcoll.edu). We will let you know where to send your actual donation when we transmit the results shortly after the Birdathon. On behalf of this next generation of birders, and their families who encourage birding as a life long outdoor activity, thank you very much.



MOS Calendar

March-April 2012

Thursday, March 1

MEETING. Frederick. Members' Night! This popular evening features a variety of short presentations of photos, slides, and/or videos from our members. Please let Bob Schaefer know in advance if you want to be on the agenda. 7 PM at Homewood at Crumland Farms (7407 Willow Rd) in Frederick. For info contact Bob Schaefer, 301-831-5660 or Pres@FrederickBirdClub.org.

Patuxent. Lake Artemesia (Luther Goldman Birding Trail). Joint trip with PGAS. Meet 3 PM at the parking lot at Berwyn Rd and Ballew Ave in Berwyn Heights. No reservations needed. Call 301-459-3375 for more info.

YMOS. Deadline to commit to youth World Series of Birding (WSB) team. Contact George Radcliffe at radclifg@gmail.com, if interested. Wanted: middle and high school students who love birds and nature. Experience not needed.

Friday, March 2

Frederick. First Friday trip. Leader and destination TBA. Meet at Culler Lake in Baker Park at 8 AM. For info, contact Bob Schaefer, 301-831-5660 or Pres@FrederickBirdClub.org.

DINNER MEETING. Harford. 6:15 PM; reservations required. Following dinner, *Dr. David Larkin* will describe "Wildlife of the Galapagos Islands." All are welcome. Churchville Presbyterian Church at Rtes 136 and 22. For more info, contact Dennis Kirkwood, 410-692-5905 or newarkfarms@gmail.com.

Saturday, March 3

Carroll. Piney Run Park. Meet 8:30 AM at the parking lot outside the gate on Martz Rd. Moderate walking around Piney Run Lake, scoping for waterfowl and exploring mixed forest

and open field edge for early migrants and winter residents. For info, call Dave Harvey, 410-795-3117.

Harford. Broad Creek Scout Camp. Explore diverse habitats of this Harford Co treasure for wintering songbirds and possible raptors. Meet at Dublin ES on Rte 136 north of Rte 1 at 8:30 AM. Co-leaders are Colleen Webster, 410-459-4577 or cwebster@harford.edu, and Sue Procell, 443-417-4919 or suzanne.a.procell.civ@mail.mil.

Howard. Winter Sparrows. Search the wetland and dry fields in this intensive search for as many sparrows as possible. Previous years have turned up non-sparrow rarities! Limit: 12. Expect difficult walking for most of the day. Knee boots a must. Facilities at some spots. Contact Bonnie Ott, bonnieott@verizon.net or 410-461-3361, to sign up and get info.

Kent. Blackwater NWR. Prime wintering waterfowl and eagle country. Perhaps even American White Pelican or Short-eared Owl. Full day; bring lunch. Meet 8 AM at Dollar General Store parking lot, Chestertown. Contact Walter Ellison and Nancy Martin, 410-778-9568 or rossgull@baybroadband.net, for more info.

Patuxent. Fran Uhler NA. Meet 7:30 AM at the end of Lemon Bridge Rd off MD 197, just north of Bowie State U. and the MARC line. No reservations required. If you have questions, contact trip leader Bill Sefton at kiwisuits@msn.com.

Sunday, March 4

Howard. Centennial Park. 2-3 hours. Easy walking on paved path around Centennial Lake. Woodlands, fields, and water host a wide variety of species. Great view of the sky for flyovers. Waterfowl expected and early

migrant passerines possible. Meet 8 AM at west end parking lot. Leader: Jeff Culler, cullerfuls@hotmail.com or 410-465-9006. Facilities available.

Talbot. Rare Bird Chase. Using MDOsprey reports, eBird Rare Bird Alerts, and MD Needs Alerts, we will determine what unique birds are within a practical distance of Easton. Our route will be one that we hope will most likely produce some of the reported rarities along with opportunities for enjoyable general birding. Leaders: Priscilla and Paul Thut, 410-745-6657. Depart Easton Acme parking lot 7 AM. Bring lunch, drinks, and snacks.

Tuesday, March 6

MEETING. Baltimore. Tuesday Evening Lecture at Cylburn Mansion, 4915 Greenspring Ave. Program: "Project OwlNet: Revealing the Migration Mysteries of Northern Saw-whet Owls," with *David Brinker* from the MD DNR. Doors open at 7 PM for socializing and snacks, show starts about 7:15 PM. For more info contact Pete Webb, 410-486-1217 or 443-904-6314 (m) or pete_webb@juno.com.


Montgomery. Informal Late Afternoon Walks until Dusk. Joint MBC/ANS trip. Meet at the end of Seneca Rd at Riley's Lock "on the bridge" at 5 PM. After checking out the river, we will proceed to Hughes Hollow; highlights here will include watching waterfowl flying in to roost. We will try for displaying woodcock if they are in the vicinity. Bring scope and flashlight and wear "muddy conditions" footwear. Reservations not required. For more info, call Jim Green at 301-742-0036 (cell).

Wednesday, March 7

Baltimore. First Wednesdays at Fort McHenry. A continuing series of monthly morning surveys of bird activity at the Fort and wetland. Scope can be useful. Cancelled in inclement weather. Meet 8 AM in the park, outside the Visitor Center. Leader: Mary Chetelat, 410-665-0769.

MEETING. **Carroll.** "Finding Rare Birds in Western Australia" by *Don Messersmith*. 7:30 PM at South Carroll Senior Center, 5928 Mineral Hill Rd, Eldersburg. Contact Dave Harvey, 410-795-3117, for more info.


MEETING. **Cecil.** Program and Speaker TBA. 7 PM at Elkton HS, 110 James St, Elkton. For more info, contact President Maryanne Dolan, maryanne.dolan@gmail.com.

 **Harford.** Timberdoodle Search. Join this evening watch for one of our most interesting (and elusive!) birds, the American Woodcock, as it performs its mating dance. Meet 6 PM at the Rte 155/I-95 P&R. The leader is Tom Gibson, 410-734-4135 or gibsonltd@aol.com.

MEETING. **Anne Arundel.** "The Amazing Story of a U.S. Biologist's Quest to Conserve Africa's Wildlife," by *Dr. Richard Ruggiero*. 8 PM at Quiet Waters Park. 600 Quiet Waters Park Rd, Annapolis.


Thursday, March 8


MEETING. **Howard.** "Birding in Wales," by *Mike Bowen*, past president of the Montgomery Bird Club. Mike will give us an overview of the outstanding natural areas of his native Wales and review the nearly 200 birds known to occur in one of Britain's most scenic regions. Hospitality and club bookstore 7:30 PM; meeting/program 8 PM at the Robinson Nature Center, 6692 Cedar Ln, Columbia. Info: Ward Ebert, 301-490-5807.


 **Montgomery.** Informal Late Afternoon Walks until Dusk. See Mar 6 listing.


MEETING. **Talbot.** Speaker: *George Armistead*. Subject: "Ornithology: The Birds and the Bees." 7 PM at William Hill Manor Auditorium, 501 Dutchmans Ln, Easton. Info: Terry Allen, 410-829-5840.


Saturday, March 10


 **Anne Arundel.** Wooten's Landing for Woodcocks. Last year's afternoon trip was so popular, we're going to tempt fate and do it again! We'll tour the park before camping out at a spot and just wait for the woodcocks to appear. Meet 4 PM at Parole P&R. Leader: Kathie Lambert, kbert59@yahoo.com.

 **Baltimore.** Middle Creek WMA. All-day trip (bring lunch) to visit this major gathering place north of Lancaster, PA for Snow Geese and other waterfowl. There is also an excellent display of mounted birds at the Visitor Center. Note: Trip may go elsewhere if Middle Creek is frozen over. Meet 8 AM at Timonium P&R on Greenspring Dr/Deereco Rd off Timonium Rd just east of I-83. Leader: Pete Webb, 410-486-1217 or 443-904-6314 (m) or pete_webb@juno.com.

 **Baltimore.** Youth Birding at Loch Raven. Ages 8-15 with parent. Waterbirds and landbirds. Possible Bald Eagle, Eastern Bluebird, Common Loon. Two-mile level walk. Meet 8 AM along Stone Hill Rd. Leader: Marty Brazeau at 410-583-0275, tropicbirder@verizon.net.


 **Carroll.** Woodcock Walk at Audrey Carroll. Meet 6 PM at Mount Airy P&R on Rte 27. The leader will be Ray Bourgeois, 240-285-4331.


 **Frederick.** Timberdoodles at Audrey Carroll. David Smith will lead us on a search for American Woodcocks. Bring a flashlight. For info, call David at 410-549-7082.


 **Howard.** Waterfowl Search. Meet at dockside parking lot, Lake Elkhorn, at 8 AM. We'll carpool to search the Howard Co waterways for ducks, grebes, mergansers, and loons. Chance of an early migrant. Leader: Kurt Schwarz, 410-461-1643 or krschwa1@verizon.net.


Sunday, March 11

Daylight Saving Time Begins

 **Baltimore.** Marshy Point Nature Center. Half-day trip for winter waterfowl, raptors, passerines. Meet 9 AM. Half-mile trail leads to point overlooking Dundee Creek. Boots advisable, scopes useful. Leaders: Debbie Terry, 410-252-8771 or dterry12@verizon.net, and Mary Byers, 410-626-7294 or baypuffin@hotmail.com.

 **Harford.** Harford Glen. Experience a variety of habitats and a great variety of birds at this neighborhood site. Meet at the Glen (west end of Wheel Rd) at 8 AM. Co-leaders are Phil Powers, 410-679-4116 or birdsinmd@verizon.net, and Ruth Bergstrom, 443-752-1967 or ruthb22@yahoo.com.


 **Howard.** Centennial Park. 2-3 hours. Easy walking on paved path around Centennial Lake. Woodlands, fields, and water host a wide variety of species. Great view of the sky for flyovers. Waterfowl expected, early migrant passerines possible. Meet 8 AM at west end parking lot. Leader: Mike Kerwin, m63kerwin@verizon.net or 410-461-2408. Facilities available.

 **Talbot.** Wye Island. In search of waterfowl, sparrows, and possible early migrants. Leader: Danny Poet, 401-827-8651. Depart Easton Acme parking lot 7 AM or meet Danny at the Wye Island Bridge at 7:30 AM. (Remember to set clocks ahead 1 hour Sat night.)

Tuesday, March 13

MEETING. **Allegany/Garrett.** "Birding Tech," by *J.B. Churchill*. 7 PM at Compton Hall, Rm 224, Frostburg State U. For add'l info, contact Mary Huebner at marybrd22@gmail.com.

MEETING. **Kent.** Speaker and Program TBA. 7:30 PM at Wesley Hall, Heron Point, E Campus Ave, Chestertown. For info contact Nancy Martin, 410-778-9568.

 **Montgomery.** Informal Late Afternoon Walks until Dusk. See Mar 6 listing.

Calendar *continued from page 11*

MEETING. Patuxent. Program and speaker TBD. 7:30 PM at the College Park Airport Annex, College Park. Add'l info at <http://www.pgadubon.org/programs.html>.

Wednesday, March 14

Harford. Timberdoodle Search. Join this evening watch for one of our most interesting (and elusive!) birds, the American Woodcock, as it performs its mating dance. Meet 6:45 PM at the Rte 155/I-95 P&R. Leaders: Elaine Beery, 410-272-6037 or ehbeery@yahoo.com, and Jane Scocca.

Thursday, March 15

Patuxent. Lake Artemesia (Luther Goldman Birding Trail). Joint trip with PGAS. Meet 3 PM at the parking lot at Berwyn Rd and Ballew Ave in Berwyn Heights. No reservations needed. Call 301-459-3375 for more info.

Friday, March 16

ANNUAL SOCIAL. Montgomery. 6:30 PM at Woodend, Chevy Chase. Social hour followed by dinner and presentation to this year's Guest of Honor, Helen Patton. The evening will conclude with the traditional members' slide show. Reservations required. For more info, contact Steve Pretl at stevep@takomavillage.org.

Saturday-Sunday, March 17-18

YMOS. Maryland Youth Birdathon. Ocean City to Western Shore. Remaining wintering birds, early migrants, owls, and rails. Fundraiser for the World Series of Birding teams. The group will begin in Ocean City on Sat morning and end in Dorchester Co that evening. The search will resume next morning in Dorchester Co and conclude in Cecil Co late Sun afternoon. Lodging will be available at local homes Fri night in Ocean City and Sat night in Dorchester Co. Students will need money for meals. Logistics and specific times will be coordinated once we know who is going. Participants can bird on either or both days. Level: beginning to advanced. Contact George Radcliffe at radclifg@gmail.com to reserve a spot.

Saturday, March 17

Baltimore. Blackwater NWR. All-day trip to see large numbers of waterfowl during the height of spring staging season. Bald Eagles are a bonus. Ospreys and Pine Warblers may be newly arrived. Early shorebirds possible. Brown-headed Nuthatch possible. Bring lunch. Meet 7:30 AM at Nursery Rd P&R. Leaders: Pete Webb, 443-904-6314 (m) or home 410-486-1217 or pete_webb@juno.com, and Kevin Graff, keyweststyle2001@gmail.com.

Baltimore. Saturday Monitoring Walks at Fort McHenry. Continuing survey of bird activity at the Fort and wetland. Cancelled in inclement weather. Meet 8 AM in the park, outside the Visitor Center. Leader: Mike Hudson, 410-443 955-1797 (m).

Cecil. Blackwater NWR and Beyond. Full day. A trip designed to see large numbers of waterfowl during the height of spring staging season. Bald Eagles are a bonus. Ospreys may be newly arrived and, if so, will be setting up territories. Some early shorebirds might be on the move. Come take advantage of the peaceful Eastern Shore ambiance before the tourist season sets in. Meet 9 AM at the refuge HQ. Bring breakfast, lunch, and snacks. Dress for possible extreme cold and wind. Bring scope if you have one. Some easy walking on level ground. Leader: Sean McCandless, seanmccandless1@comcast.net.

Frederick. Leader's Choice. Full day. Destinations will be determined based on what's being seen or has been reported recently. Come prepared for anything; birding may be within the county, elsewhere in MD, or even in a neighboring state. Let's hope for some rarities and surprises! Contact leader, Marcia Balestri, for more info at 301-473-5098.

Harford. Harford Waterfowl Tour. Visit several areas in the county to see a variety of waterfowl as they congregate prior to migrating north. Meet at the McDonald's in Edgewood on Rte 40 at 6:45 AM. Bring a

photo ID for admittance to APG. Leader Dave Webb, 410-939-3537 or porzana@comcast.net.

Patuxent. Governor Bridge NA. Meet 7:30 AM at the parking lot for the park, located on Governor Bridge Rd approximately 1 mile east of MD 301. No reservations required. If you have questions, contact trip leader Bill Sefton at kiwisuits@msn.com.

Sunday, March 18

Howard. Centennial Park. 2-3 hours. Easy walking on paved path around Centennial Lake. Woodlands, fields, and water host a wide variety of species. Great view of the sky for flyovers. Waterfowl expected; early migrant passerines possible. Meet 8 AM at west end parking lot. Leader: Joe Byrnes, 410-730-5329, LBRoller@verizon.net. Facilities available.

Talbot. Akridge Property. We will explore shallow freshwater ponds, hedgerows, brush piles, glens, woodland edges, and meadows. Leaders: Priscilla and Paul Thut, 410-745-6657. Depart Easton Acme parking lot at 7AM. Breakfast hosts: Mary Cotton and Tom Corl.

Monday, March 19

Washington. Meet for dinner in Clear Spring and then move on to nearby Blair's Valley in search of woodcocks and owls. Contact Dave Weesner at 301-302-6376 for starting time and place.

Tuesday, March 20

Montgomery. Informal Late Afternoon Walks until Dusk. See Mar 6 listing.

Saturday, March 24

Frederick. Swan Harbor. 3/4 day. We'll visit this fine park in Harford Co looking for waterfowl, sparrows, and wintering grassland species. Leader: Kathy Calvert, 301-698-1298.

Harford. Circle the Susquehanna. Bird the lower Susquehanna Valley from Havre de Grace north to Conowingo and down the Cecil shore. Expect eagles, waterfowl, sparrows,

and more. Meet at Tydings Park at the south end of Havre de Grace at 8 AM. Contact Les Eastman, les@birdtreks.com, for further info.

H Howard. Sharps at Waterford Farm. Half day. Fields with crop residue, extensive woodlands, Cattail Creek and floodplain, three ponds, and five shallow waterfowl impoundments make for diverse habitats and good birding opportunities. Meet 8 AM at farm parking area, through barns on right. Knee-high waterproof footwear required for part of walk. Leader: Wes Earp: the_earps@verizon.net, 410-531-3197. Facilities available.

Sunday, March 25

H Howard. Centennial Park. 2-3 hours. Easy walking on paved path around Centennial Lake. Woodlands, fields, and water host a wide variety of species. Great view of the sky for flyovers. Waterfowl expected; early migrant passerines possible. Meet 8 AM at west end parking lot. Leader: Allen Lewis, allenlewis@gmail.com. Facilities available.

H Talbot. Mill Creek Sanctuary Work Day. Work at our own local sanctuary with of course some time for birding. Details, including any tools you may need to bring, will be sent along via our birding hotline. Please come out and help! Leaders: Jan Reese, 410-745-2875, and Terry Allen, 410-829-5840. After morning work, we will stop at the Easton Airport Café for lunch.

Monday, March 26

ANNUAL DINNER MEETING. **Tri-County.** 6 PM at Ward Museum of Wildlife Art, Education Rm. Program: "Namibia, Botswana, and Zambia: An African Safari" by *Sam Dyke and JoAnn Wilber*. For more info, contact Betty Pitney at 410-543-1853.

Tuesday, March 27

MEETING. **Washington.** 7 PM at the Mt. Aetna Nature Center. Program TBA. Call 301-797-8454 for details.

Saturday, March 31

H Baltimore. Patterson Park, at the White House (27 S. Patterson Park Ave). Early spring migrants found in this urban park may include Caspian Tern, Merlin, Pine Warbler, Fox Sparrow, and American Woodcock! Meet 8 AM at the White House. Leader: Dave Curson, 410-675-4963 or dcurson@audubon.org.

H Harford. Susquehanna River Gulls and Waterfowl. Enjoy birding at Lapidum Boat Landing and other spots along the Susquehanna. This is prime time for unusual gulls (Little and Black-headed) and grebes, including Red-necked and Horned. Meet at the Lapidum boat launch at the end of Lapidum Rd at 7:30 AM. The leaders are Mark Magnani, mmagnani@peoplepc.com, and Dennis Kirkwood, 410-692-5905 or newarkfarms@gmail.com.

H Kent. Owl Prowl. Meet 7 PM at the Eastern Neck NWR Lodge. This field trip will hopefully bring us face to face with an owl or two after an introduction to local species and their calls. Leaders: Walter Ellison and Nancy Martin, 410-778-9568 or rossgull@baybroadband.net.

H Tri-County. Deal Island and Fairmount WMA. Waterfowl, herons, and other March birds. Bring lunch and drinks. Meet 7:30 AM in Ward Museum of Wildfowl Art parking lot on S Schumaker Dr on Beaglin Park Dr in Salisbury. Leader: Ron Gutberlet, 410-334-2655.

Sunday, April 1

H Baltimore. Cylburn Self-guided Walk. Meet 8:30 AM at the Vollmer Center parking lot (4915 Greenspring Ave) for easy birding in Cylburn's gardens and urban forest. Beginning birders welcome. No designated leader. Coordinator: Joe Lewandowski, 410-358-7834 or ilenel@juno.com.

H Talbot. Urban Birding. We will again bird the variety of habitats around the Target Shopping Center as well as nearby locations in search

of wintering birds and early spring migrants. We usually get the first of year Rough-winged Swallows on this trip. Leader: Terry Allen, 410-829-5840. Depart Easton Acme parking lot at 7 AM. Breakfast Hosts: Patty Allen, Savana Turner, and Harpo the dog.

Tuesday, April 3

H Baltimore. Lake Roland. A series of weekly walks to follow the progress of Spring migration. Habitats include woods, lake, streams, and marsh. Meet 8:30 AM at footbridge. Beginning birders welcome. Note change in parking and meeting place from last year—revised directions and meeting place to be announced. Leader: John Landers, 410-426-3374 or dado1bw@aol.com.

MEETING. **Baltimore.** Tuesday Evening Lecture at Cylburn Mansion, 4915 Greenspring Ave. Program: "Southeast Asia—Birds, Culture, and Cuisine," with *Daphne Gemmill*. Doors open at 7 PM for socializing and snacks, show starts about 7:15 PM. For more info, contact Pete Webb, 410-486-1217 or 443-904-6314 (m) or pete_webb@juno.com.

Wednesday, April 4

H Baltimore. First Wednesdays at Fort McHenry. A continuing series of monthly morning surveys of bird activity at the Fort and wetland. Scope can be useful. Cancelled in inclement weather. Meet 8 AM in the park, outside the Visitor Center. Leader: Mary Chetelat, 410-665-0769.

MEETING. **Carroll.** "History of Bird Study, Both Recreational and Professional, in North America" by *Walter Ellison*. 7:30 PM at South Carroll Senior Center, 5928 Mineral Hill Rd, Eldersburg. Contact Dave Harvey, 410-795-3117, for more info.

MEETING. **Cecil.** Program TBA. 7 PM at the Elkton HS. For more info, contact President Maryanne Dolan at maryanne.dolan@gmail.com.

Calendar *continued from page 13***Thursday, April 5**

MEETING. Frederick. Tonight's featured speaker, *Dennis Coskren*, will discuss "Maryland's Geology and How It Influences Habitats." 7 PM at Homewood at Crumland Farms (7407 Willow Rd) in Frederick. For info, contact Bob Schaefer, 301-831-5660 or Pres@FrederickBirdClub.org.

Patuxent. Lake Artemesia (Luther Goldman Birding Trail). Joint trip with PGAS. Meet 6 PM at the parking lot at Berwyn Rd and Ballew Ave in Berwyn Heights. No reservations needed. Call 301-459-3375 for more info.

Friday, April 6

MEETING. Anne Arundel. 8 PM at the Arlington Echo Outdoor Education Center. "Project Puffin and Other Successes with Seabird Restoration." *Dr. Stephen W. Kress*, "The Puffin Man," VP for Bird Conservation for NAS.

Frederick. First Friday Trip. Leader and destination to be announced. Meet at Culler Lake in Baker Park at 8 AM. For info, contact Bob Schaefer, 301-831-5660 or Pres@FrederickBirdClub.org.

Saturday, April 7

Allegany/Garrett. Garrett County Ponds (Finzel Swamp, Piney Reservoir, Meadows Lake and Campground, and New Germany SP). Pack a lunch. Meet at Parkside School at 9 AM. Contact: Mary Huebner, 301-777-0545 or marybrd22@gmail.com.

Frederick. Hughes Hollow. Half day. This is one of Montgomery Co's premier spots and we'll go in search of late wintering ducks, early spring migrants, and woodland and wetland species. Contact leader, Jim Green, 301-208-2393, and/or Bob Schaefer, 301-831-5660 or Pres@FrederickBirdClub.org.

Howard. Alpha Ridge Landfill. Half day. Vesper Sparrow and other field birds possible. Meadowlarks, kestrels, and other open country birds expected. Meet 7:45 AM at Alpha Ridge Park to carpool to landfill.

Moderate walking over hills and fields of the landfill. Leader: Ralph Cullison, rociii@cullison.org, 410-442-2181. Facilities available.

Patuxent. Fran Uhler NA. Meet 7:30 AM at the end of Lemon Bridge Rd off MD 197, just north of Bowie State U. and the MARC line. No reservations required. If you have questions, contact trip leader Bill Sefton at kiwisuits@msn.com.

Sunday, April 8

Baltimore. Cylburn Self-guided Walk. Meet 8:30 AM at the Vollmer Center parking lot (4915 Greenspring Ave) for easy birding in Cylburn's gardens and urban forest. Beginning birders welcome. No designated leader. Coordinator: Joe Lewandowski, 410-358-7834 or ilenel@juno.com.

Baltimore. Marshy Point Nature Center. Half-day trip for winter waterfowl, raptors, passerines. Meet 9 AM. Half mile trail leads to point overlooking Dundee Creek. Boots advisable, scopes useful. Leaders: Bob Rineer, 410-252-6408 or rrineer1@jhmi.edu, and Brent and Mary Byers, 410-626-7294 or baypuffin@hotmail.com.

Talbot. East of Route 50, Trappe Bottomlands. Leader: Jan Reese, 410-745-2875. Contact leader for trip details.

Tuesday, April 10

MEETING. Allegany/Garrett. "Birding in Peru, from the Andes to the Pacific," by *Mikey Lutmerding*. 7 PM at Compton Hall, Rm 224, Frostburg State U. For add'l info, contact Mary Huebner at marybrd22@gmail.com.

Baltimore. Lake Roland. A series of weekly walks to follow the progress of Spring migration. Habitats include woods, lake, streams, and marsh. Meet 8:30 AM at footbridge. Beginning birders welcome. Note change in parking and meeting place from last year—revised directions and meeting place to be announced. Leader: Paul Noell, 410-243-2652 or myconut@verizon.net.

MEETING. Kent. Speaker and program TBA. 7:30 PM at Wesley Hall, Heron Point, E Campus Ave, Chestertown. For info, contact Nancy Martin, 410-778-9568.

MEETING. Patuxent. Program and speaker TBD. 7:30 PM at the College Park Airport Annex, College Park, MD. Add'l info at <http://www.pgaudubon.org/programs.html>.

Montgomery. Jug Bay, Prince George's County. Half day. Joint trip with ANS. Possible Rusty Blackbirds, migrating Wilson's Snipe, and courtship display of Osprey. Wear footwear for muddy conditions. Meet 8 AM. Call leader for details and driving instructions. Check ANS *News* for more info. Reservations required. Limit:15. Leader: John Bjerke, 240-401-1643.

Wednesday, April 11

Talbot. Poplar Island. In search of early shorebirds, waders, gulls, and waterfowl. Always a popular trip so sign up early; only 24 spaces available. Leader/Coordinator: Vince DeSanctis, 410-886-2009. Depart MES Land Base on Tilghman Island promptly at 9 AM. Arrive 15 minutes early! Boat returns at 1:30 PM. Bring drinks, snacks, and perhaps insecticide.

Thursday, April 12

MEETING. Howard. "The Wonderful World of Bats: Why We Should Make Every Effort to Conserve Them," by *Nina Fascione*, Executive Dir. of Bat Conservation Intl. She will discuss the essential role bats play in the world's ecosystems and the many threats they face today. Hospitality and club bookstore 7:30 PM; meeting/program 8 PM at the Robinson Nature Center, 6692 Cedar Ln, Columbia. Info: Ward Ebert, 301-490-5807.

MEETING. Talbot. *Matt Whitbeck* will discuss the status of the Delmarva Fox Squirrel and the success of relocation programs. Matt will also give pointers on Delmarva Fox Squirrel ID. 7 PM at William Hill Manor Auditorium, 501 Dutchmans Ln, Easton. Info: Terry Allen, 410-829-5840.

Saturday, April 14

H Anne Arundel. Fort Smallwood Hawk Watch. Join Sue Ricciardi, 410-647-9513, for a morning of counting hawks. If the hawks don't cooperate, then we'll walk around the park to see what else may have arrived. Meet 9 AM at Severna Park P&R, on the corner of Jones Station Rd and Ritchie Hwy.

H Anne Arundel. Pocomoke River Canoe Trip. Early Spring migrants. Nick Nicholson, 410-353-3329 or nickinchrist@netzero.net, will be leading the ever-popular trip. Prothonotary Warblers have been known to practically land on canoes. Bring your own canoe/kayak or rent one from the livery in Snow Hill. Bring lunch. Meet 7 AM Bay 50 Shopping Center off Rte 50 on Whitehall Rd. Please contact Nick in advance to make reservations.

H Baltimore. Smith Island. All-day trip to see the herons, egrets, and other birds on the island, plus gannets, sea ducks, and possibly pelagic species up close during the boat rides to and from the island. Bring lunch, snacks, beverages, and cash. The General Store on the island will be open (cash only). Rental bicycles and golf carts are available. Car pool from Nursery P&R at 7 AM or meet at the Point Lookout boat dock at 9 AM. The boat leaves at 9:30 AM, arrives at the island about 11 AM, and can pick up about 2:30 PM (negotiable) for the hour-and-a-half ride back to Point Lookout. This trip requires reservations by Apr 6 and \$25-\$35 cash each person (no credit cards or checks). Limit 30-40. If we don't fill the trip by midnight Wed, the trip will be cancelled. Contact Pete Webb, 410-486-1217 or 443 904-6314 or pete_webb@juno.com, for reservations, and again Thurs or Fri to learn if the trip is go or no-go. Fee to be paid at the boat dock before boarding Sat morning. Rain date is Apr 21.

H Carroll. C&O Canal at Point of Rocks. Meet 8 AM at the Rte 32 P&R north of I-70. Looking for some very early migrants or some late winter birds. Leader: Jerry Tarbell, 410-857-1109.

H Indicates Field Trip

H Harford. Susquehanna SP. An ideal time to enjoy emerging wildflowers, early migrant songbirds, and lingering winter visitors. Meet at the parking area at the confluence of Deer Creek and the Susquehanna River just north of Rock Run Mill at 8:00 AM. Leaders are Colleen Webster, cwebster@harford.edu, and Sue Procell, procell1@comcast.net.

H Montgomery. Izaak Walton League, B-CC Chapter. Half day. MBC's second official trip to this large private property south of Poolesville. Woods, hedgerows, streams, fields, and ponds provide a wide range of bird habitats, and migration should be under way. 7 AM at the League's chapterhouse. Reservations required, but no attendee number limit. For reservations and more info, including driving directions, please contact leader, Mike Bowen, 301-530-5764 or dhmbowen@yahoo.com. B-CC Chapter Treasurer and MBC member Jim Tate will co-lead.

Y YMOS. Youth birding on the lower Eastern Shore (Nassawango Creek, Elliott Island, and Blackwater NWR). Early migrant search. Meet 7 AM (returning by 6 PM) at Sailwinds Park, Cambridge. Level: beginning to advanced. Contact George Radcliffe at radclifg@gmail.com to reserve a spot.

Sunday, April 15

H Baltimore. Cylburn Self-guided Walk. Meet 8:30 AM at the Vollmer Center parking lot (4915 Greenspring Ave) for easy birding in Cylburn's gardens and urban forest. Beginning birders welcome. No designated leader. Coordinator: Joe Lewandowski, 410-358-7834 or ilenel@juno.com.

H Howard. U. of MD Farm. Half day. Search the wetland and dry fields for migrants. Expect difficult walking. Bring gear for multiple habitats. Knee boots a must and waterproof pants advisable. Limit: 12. No facilities. Contact Bonnie for meet location and to sign up, bonnieott@verizon.net. No facilities.

H Talbot. Pickering Creek. Leader: TBD. For more info, contact Terry Allen, 410-829-5840.

Tuesday, April 17

H Baltimore. Lake Roland. A series of weekly walks to follow the progress of Spring migration. Habitats include woods, lake, streams, and marsh. Meet 8:30 AM at footbridge. Beginning birders welcome. Note change in parking and meeting place from last year; revised directions and meeting place TBA. Leader: Ruth Culbertson, 410-825-1379 or ruthec@verizon.net.

H Harford. Jerusalem Mill. Visit this appealing stretch of the Little Gunpowder River marking Harford's western border. Meet at the Mill on Jerusalem Road (not far west of Rte 152) at 7:00 AM. The leader is Phil Powers, birdsinmd@verizon.net.

Wednesday, April 18

MEETING. Montgomery. "Warbler Workshop: 2012 Edition." *Mike Bowen, Linda Friedland, and Jim Nelson* (MBC's answer to the Three Tenors—or two tenors and a soprano) will remind us once again how much fun warbler ID is! 7:30 PM at Potomac Presbyterian Church, 10301 River Rd, Potomac. For more info, contact Steve Pretl at stevep@takomavillage.org.

Thursday, April 19

MEETING. Caroline. "A Year on the Road with North American Birds" presented by *Ron Gutberlet*. 7:30 PM, Caroline Co Public Library, 100 Market St, Denton.

H Patuxent. Lake Artemesia (Luther Goldman Birding Trail). Joint trip with PGAS. Meet 6 PM at the parking lot at Berwyn Rd and Ballew Ave in Berwyn Heights. No reservations needed. Call 301-459-3375 for more info.

H Washington. Call Shirley Ford, 301-241-3020, for starting time and place for a half-day trip to nearby Manahan Rd and the Owen's Creek area.

Calendar *continued from page 15***Saturday, April 21**

■ Anne Arundel. Governor Bridge NA. Migrants and wildflowers. We hope to meet with the Patuxent MOS Chapter to see this wonderful area. Meet 6:30 AM at Parole P&R located on Harry Truman Pkwy, between Riva and South Haven Rds. Leader: Kathie Lambert, kbirt59@yahoo.com.

■ Baltimore. Huntley Meadows, VA. Bring picnic lunch for three-quarter-day trip to northern VA woods and freshwater marsh with boardwalk trail, for resident wildlife and early spring migrants. American Bittern and Sora possible. Three-hour level walk on paved paths and boardwalks. Optional extension, after picnic lunch, for Prothonotary Warblers singing on territory in MD. Meet 7:30 AM at Nursery Rd P&R. Leader: Pete Webb, 410-486-1217 (h), 443 904-6314 (m) or pete_webb@juno.com.

■ Baltimore. Saturday Monitoring Walks at Fort McHenry. Continuing survey of bird activity at the Fort and wetland. Cancelled in inclement weather. Meet 8 AM in the park, outside the Visitor Center. Leader: Mike Hudson, 443-955-1797 (m).

■ Cecil. Conowingo Wildflowers and Birds. Meet at Fisherman's Park at Conowingo Dam. Bring scope if you have one. Wear sturdy footwear for walking trails that may be muddy. Easy walking on a level, well-graded trail. Leader, Pat Valdata, pvaldata@zoominternet.net. Contact Pat for meet time.

■ Howard. Mt. Pleasant Farm. 2-3 hrs. Meet 8 AM at parking lot near the barn. Easy walking through the fields of Mt. Pleasant. Tree lines, hedgerows, and streams provide opportunity for non-meadow species. Great opportunity for flyovers. Facilities available. Co-leaders: Mike Kerwin, 240-357-7625 or m63kerwin@verizon.net, and Scott Berglund, 410-750-2568 or Business250@yahoo.com.

■ Kent. Beginners' Bird Walk at Eastern Neck NWR. Half day. In honor of Earth Day, we'll spend the

morning exploring several of the trails and overlooks, looking for a variety of migrants, from raptors to warblers. Meet 8 AM at Dollar General parking lot, Chestertown. Leaders: Walter Ellison and Nancy Martin, 410-778-9568 or rossgull@baybroadband.net.

■ Patuxent. Governor Bridge NA. Meet 7:30 AM at the parking lot, located on Governor Bridge Rd, approximately 1 mile east of MD 301. No reservations required. If you have questions, contact trip leader Bill Sefton at kiwisuits@msn.com.

■ Patuxent. Patuxent River (southern PG County area). Possible stops include Jug Bay, Milltown Landing, and Aquasco Farms. Meet at Mt. Calvert Park at 8:10 AM. Reservations required. Contact Fred Shaffer at 410-721-1744 to make reservations and get add'l info.

Sunday, April 22

■ Baltimore. Cylburn Self-guided Walk. Meet 8:30 AM at the Vollmer Center parking lot (4915 Greenspring Ave) for easy birding in Cylburn's gardens and urban forest. Beginning birders welcome. No designated leader. Coordinator: Joe Lewandowski, 410-358-7834 or ilenel@juno.com.

■ Baltimore. Chimney Swifts at Dusk. The swifts occasionally switch nightly roosting sites between the Hampden and the Conservatory (Druid Hill Park) chimneys, so please check the BBC web site (<http://baltimorebirdclub.org/>) on the Friday before the walk to confirm location. Meet 7:30 PM (come at 7 PM if the weather is cloudy or gray). Cancelled if raining. Leader: Joan Cwi, 410-467-5352 or jafjsc@verizon.net.

■ BIG DAY. Frederick. Help us find as many species as possible in Catoctin Creek SP. Join us for all or part of the day. Leader: Mike Welch, 301-685-3561.

■ Harford. Cromwell Valley Park. Take an avian excursion through this Baltimore Co preserve sure to

score well with spring migrants. Led by veterans Dave Larkin, dlarkin@towson.edu, and Phil Powers, birdsinmd@verizon.net. Meet at the commuter lot on the west side of Rte 52 (Fallston Rd) just north of Rte 147 (Harford Rd) at 7 AM.

■ Montgomery. Hugh Mahanes Presidents' Walk. Hughes Hollow and Vicinity. Half day. Participation of all former club Presidents is encouraged, and everyone is welcome. Meet 7 AM at the Hughes Hollow parking lot. Reservations required. For more info, contact Steve Pretl at stevep@takomavillage.org.

■ Talbot. Tuckahoe SP. Good location for Kentucky and Prairie Warblers, Yellow-breasted Chat, waterthrush, tanagers, and Barred Owl. Leaders: Karen and Bill Harris, 410-770-8303. Depart Easton Acme parking lot at 7 AM. Or meet leader at 8 AM at Tuckahoe Lake parking area.

■ Tri-County. Nassawango Preserve. Migrating and resident vireos and warblers and other specialties of the swamp forest. Bring snacks and drink. Meet 7 AM in Ward Museum of Wildfowl Art parking lot on S Schumaker Dr on Beaglin Park Dr in Salisbury. Leader: Betty Pitney, 410-543-1853.

Monday, April 23

MEETING. **Tri-County.** "Colorado Birding," by *Larry and Jean Fry*. 7 PM at Asbury Methodist Church, Fox Rm, south entrance, Camden Ave, Salisbury. For more info, contact Betty Pitney at 410-543-1853.

Tuesday, April 24

■ Baltimore. Lake Roland. A series of weekly walks to follow the progress of Spring migration. Habitats include woods, lake, streams, and marsh. Meet 8:30 AM at footbridge. Beginning birders welcome. Note change in parking and meeting place from last year; revised directions and meeting place TBA. Leader: Roberta Ross, 410-467-8137 or RobertaBRoss@aol.com.


■ Indicates Field Trip

MEETING. Washington. 7 PM at the Mt. Aetna Nature Center. Program TBA. Call 301-797-8454 for details.


Saturday, April 28


Baltimore. Soldiers Delight.

Warblers, flycatchers, and tanagers are featured as spring migration heats up in this globally rare ecosystem. Meet 7:30 AM. [From I-695 Beltway/exit 18 Liberty Rd, go west 4 miles, bear right onto Deer Park Rd just before traffic light and water tower, go 2 miles to historical marker, overlook, and gravel lot on left.] Leader: Keith Eric Costley, 443-985-6849 or oriolekec1@comcast.net.


 **Baltimore.** Patterson Park. Join Mike Hudson and other youth birders and catch Spring migration at this Balt. City park. This regularly scheduled bird walk open to the public. Some nice warblers have been known to stop here during migration. Meet 8 AM at the White House just inside the west edge of the park at intersection of S. Patterson Park Ave and Lombard St. Leader: Dave Curson, 410-675-4963 or dcurson@audubon.org.


NATIVE PLANT SALE. Frederick. Held by Audubon Society of Central MD, at the Audrey Carroll Audubon Sanctuary. Please support this sale at one of our favorite and most productive birding hot spots. More info can be found at www.centralmdaudubon.org.

 **Harford.** Rocks SP. This field trip will tour the wooded slopes of a portion of the Deer Creek watershed that provides attractive habitat for a wide variety of birdlife. Meet 7 AM at the Ranger Station parking area on Rocks Chrome Hill Rd. Leaders: Mark Magnani, mmagnani@peoplepc.com, and Dennis Kirkwood, 410-692-5905 or newarkfarms@gmail.com.


 **Kent.** Millington WMA. Early migrants and open-country birds. Songbird migration should be just getting into high gear in the woods and meadows of this excellent location for migrants and breeding forest


birds. Half day. Meet 8 AM at Dollar General parking lot, Chestertown. Leaders: Walter Ellison and Nancy Martin, 410-778-9568 or rossgull@baybroadband.net.


 **Montgomery.** Blue Mash. Half day. Waterproof boots helpful. Meet 7:30 AM at Zion Rd parking lot. Call leader for reservations and directions. Limit: 10. Leader: Mark England, 240-207-3132 (h) or 240-375-4500 (m).


 **Washington.** Join Bruce Field for half day of local nature photography. Call Bruce at 301-797-6189 for details.


Sunday, April 29

 **Baltimore.** Cylburn Self-guided Walk. Meet 8:30 AM at the Vollmer Center parking lot (4915 Greenspring Ave) for easy birding in Cylburn's gardens and urban forest. Beginning birders welcome. No designated leader. Coordinator: Joe Lewandowski, 410-358-7834 or ilenel@juno.com.


 **Carroll.** McKeldin Area of Patapsco Valley SP. Look and listen for spring migrants and newly arrived breeding birds. Meet 7:30 AM at the parking lot on the west side of Marriottsville Rd, on the north side of the railroad tracks, just south of the South Branch of the Patapsco River (at the Howard/Carroll county line). Leader: Bob Ringler, 410-303-2792.

 **Montgomery.** Occoquan Bay NWR. Half day. Explore the diverse habitats in this one-square-mile refuge at the confluence of the Potomac and Occoquan Rivers in Woodbridge, VA. A variety of raptors and migratory warblers, vireos, thrushes, and flycatchers should be present, and rails and bitterns are possible. Meet at the parking lot in the center of the refuge at 8 AM. Leader: Gerry Hawkins, 571-277-8406 or maineusa@comcast.net. [From MD, take I-495 south to I-95 south to Exit 161 (Woodbridge), follow Rte 1 south, cross the Occoquan River, turn left at the light onto Dawson Beach Rd and follow this road to the end.]

 **Talbot.** Hope House. Expect to enjoy birds of forest, field, and shoreline. Leader: Les Roslund, 410-763-8169. Depart Easton Acme parking lot at 7 AM.


 **YMOS.** Western Shore Migrant Search (Cecil, Harford, and Baltimore counties). Preparation for the WSB. Meet 5:45 AM (returning by 6:30 PM) at Elkton McDonalds (Rtes 40/213). Level: beginning to advanced. Contact George Radcliffe at radclifg@gmail.com to reserve a spot.


Tuesday, May 1

 **Baltimore.** Lake Roland. A series of weekly walks to follow the progress of Spring migration. Habitats include woods, lake, streams, and marsh. Meet 8:30 AM at footbridge. Beginning birders welcome. Note change in parking and meeting place from last year; revised directions and meeting place TBA. Leader: Peter Lev, 410-823-2962 or plev@comcast.net.

MEETING. Baltimore. Tuesday Evening Lecture at Cylburn Mansion, 4915 Greenspring Ave. "Twenty Years of Changing Birdlife: Results of the 2002-2006 MD-DC Breeding Bird Atlas Project," with *Walter Ellison*, project director. Doors open at 7 PM for socializing and snacks, show starts about 7:15 PM. For more info contact Pete Webb, 410-486-1217 or 443-904-6314 (m) or pete_webb@juno.com.

Wednesday, May 2

 **Baltimore.** First Wednesdays at Fort McHenry. A continuing series of monthly morning surveys of bird activity at the Fort and wetland. Scope can be useful. Cancelled in inclement weather. Meet 8 AM in the park, outside the Visitor Center. Leader: Mary Chetelat, 410-665-0769.

 **Baltimore.** Evening Walk at Fort McHenry. First in a series of evening bird walks at the Fort. Scope can be useful. Cancelled in inclement weather. Meet 6 PM and park outside the gate. Leader: Keith Eric Costley, 443-985-6489 or oriolekec1@comcast.net.

Calendar continued from page 17

MEETING. **Carroll.** "Nature Photography" by *Ken Koons* of the *Carroll County Times*, 7:30 PM at South Carroll Senior Center, 5928 Mineral Hill Rd, Eldersburg. Contact Dave Harvey, 410-795-3117, for more info.

MEETING. **Cecil.** Program TBA. 7 PM at the Elkton HS. For more info, contact President Maryanne Dolan at maryanne.dolan@gmail.com.

Thursday, May 3

MEETING. **Frederick.** *Gail Mackiernan* will describe her cruise-ship birding, "East Pacific Odyssey. . . or, If It's Tuesday, It Must Be Ecuador." 7 PM at Homewood at Crumland Farms (7407 Willow Rd) in Frederick. For info, contact Bob Schaefer, 301-831-5660 or Pres@FrederickBirdClub.org.

Patuxent. Lake Artemesia (Luther Goldman Birding Trail). Joint trip with PGAS. Meet 6 PM at the parking lot at Berwyn Rd and Ballew Ave in Berwyn Heights. No reservations needed. Call 301-459-3375 for more info.

Friday, May 4

MEETING. **Anne Arundel.** 8 PM at the Arlington Echo Outdoor Education Center. "Horseshoe Crabs and Shorebirds: The Inextricable Connection and Conservation Concerns" by *Gerald Winegrad* and *Stacy Epperson*.

Frederick. First Friday Trip. Leader and destination TBA. Meet at Culler Lake in Baker Park at 8 AM. For info, contact Bob Schaefer, 301-831-5660 or Pres@FrederickBirdClub.org.

MEETING. **Harford.** Pizza party starting at 6:30 PM; reservations required. After pizza, the students of Prospect Mill ES will report on their school's bird club activities. Harford Glen Environmental Edu Ctr, 502 West Wheel Rd in Bel Air. For more info, contact Dennis Kirkwood, 410-692-5905 or newarkfarms@gmail.com.

Saturday, May 5

Anne Arundel. Southern Maryland. North Beach, Cypress Swamp, Flag Ponds, and Calvert Cliffs SP. Facilities at some stops. Bring lunch. Leader:

Nick Nicholson or 410-353-3329 or nickinchrist@netzero.net. Meet 7:30 AM at Parole P&R located on Harry Truman Pkwy, between Riva and South Haven Rds.

Baltimore. Milford Mill Park. One-mile level walk on paved path for migrant warblers, thrushes, tanagers, grosbeaks, and other songbirds. Meet 7:30 AM at small lot near park entrance off Milford Mill Rd. If the lot is full, park along the side street across Milford Mill Rd from the park entrance. Leader: Pete Webb, 410-486-1217 (h) or 443-904-6314 (m), or pete_webb@juno.com

Baltimore. Youth Birding at Cromwell Valley Park. Ages 8-15 with parent. On the best warbler-birding day of the year, learn about how to bird with other birders ages 8 to 15. Learn how to use field guides and iPod apps to locate birds. Meet 8:30 AM. Please register for this program. Leaders: Rose Anderson, 443-802-8012, rose.k.anderson@gmail.com, and Marty Brazeau, 410-583-0275, tropicbirder@verizon.net.

Cecil. Conowingo Dam and Fish Ladder. Meet 7 AM at the dam. Leader: Maryanne Dolan, maryanne.dolan@gmail.com.

Frederick. Little Bennett RP. Half day. This Montgomery Co park is a magnet for migrating warblers and other woodland species. Leader: Gemma Radko, 301-514-2894.

Harford. Fourth Annual Epic Birding Contest. We may not have Jack Black, Owen Wilson, and Steve Martin from "The Big Year," but we will have a spirited competition among teams to compile the highest tally of different species seen for this one morning. Don't miss out on this fun time at Susquehanna SP. Birders at all skill levels welcome. Meet at the Rock Run Mill at 6:30 AM for team selections and rule review. Counting will begin at 6:45 AM and end at 11:30 AM. Rally celebration will occur at approximately 12 PM at the Tidewater Grille in Havre de

Grace. Family members and others are welcome to join the contestants for the celebration. Contact Tom Gibson, gibsonlld@aol.com. Rain date: May 6.

Howard and Montgomery. Pigtail at Triadelphia Reservoir. 2-3 hour joint trip in conjunction with WSSC. Meet 8 AM at the Green Bridge Rd parking lot off Triadelphia Mill Rd (note this is the Howard side, Green Bridge Rd). The cove is bordered on three sides by deciduous and coniferous woods. Extensive mudflats may exist, raising the possibility of shorebirds. For more info, contact the leader: Michael O'Sullivan, fr84wrdr@yahoo.com. Facilities available (rustic).

Kent. Beginners' Bird Walk at Brampton Inn. Half day. By special arrangement with the owners of this local B&B, we'll take a leisurely walk among wood margins, fields, and small ponds looking for spring migrants: swallows, warblers, vireos, and sparrows. Two to three hours. Meet 8 AM at Dollar General parking lot, Chestertown. Leaders: Walter Ellison and Nancy Martin, 410-778-9568 or rossgull@baybroadband.net.


Patuxent. Fran Uhler NA. Meet 7:30 AM at the end of Lemon Bridge Rd off MD 197, just north of Bowie State U. and the MARC line. No reservations required. If you have questions, contact trip leader, Bill Sefton, at kiwisuits@msn.com.


Washington. Warm up for the May Count with a morning of birding on the Antietam Battlefield. Call 301-797-8454 for details.


Sunday, May 6


Anne Arundel. Fairhill NRA and Tri-State Bird Rescue. Come to an area rich in bird diversity during spring migration, led by Sean McCandless. Sean is an expert in bird identification and Fairhill is his favorite haunt this time of year. After a thorough walk, we will eat our bag lunches, and then those interested can drive 20 minutes further to Tri-State Bird Rescue in Newark, DE. Volunteer coordinator Julie Bartley will give us a tour of the small facility that does so much for injured and orphaned


birds. Leader: Stacy Epperson, 410-987-7533 or tryswim@comcast.net. Meet 6:30 AM at Severna Park P&R located on the corner of Jones Station Rd and Ritchie Hwy.

 **Anne Arundel.** Patuxent River Park, Merkle Wildlife Sanctuary. Half-day trip for migrants in a great place by the river. Meet 7 AM at Parole P&R on Harry Truman Pkwy, between Riva and South Haven Rds. Leader: Barbara Ricciardi, barbararicciardi@bipc.com.

 **Baltimore.** Leakin Park. Please join us for a bird walk to Gwynns Falls/Leakin Park. This (approximately) 1,200-acre wilderness park in west Balt City contains mature and secondary forest as well as riparian habitats and some limited field habitat. Meet 8 AM at the parking lot at the corner of Windsor Mill Rd and Eagle Dr, (1900 Eagle Dr). Leaders: Elise and Paul Kreiss, 410-367-8194 or ekreiss@toadmail.com or pkreiss@toadmail.com.

 **Baltimore.** Cylburn Self-guided Walk. Meet 8:30 AM at the Vollmer Center parking lot (4915 Greenspring Ave) for easy birding in Cylburn's gardens and urban forest. Beginning birders welcome. No designated leader. Coordinator: Joe Lewandowski, 410-358-7834 or ilenel@juno.com.

 **FRED ARCHIBALD MAY COUNT.** **Frederick.** Meet at the Sanctuary at 6 AM. Coordinator: Bob Schaefer, 301-831-5660 or Pres@FrederickBirdClub.org.

 **Montgomery and Talbot.** Little Bennett RP. A joint trip near peak of migration for warblers and vireos, including those breeding in this varied habitat. Trip is space limited, so please make reservations in advance by contacting the leader, Gemma Radko, 310-514-2894, or Terry Allen, 410-829-5840. Breakfast hostess: The gracious and always smiling Helen Patton. Depart Easton Acme parking lot 6:30 AM.

 Indicates Field Trip

Birds of Note *continued from page 3*

- During the Christmas Count in St. Mary's County on Dec 18, Tyler Bell of California, MD discovered a BARROW'S GOLDENEYE. The bird, a beautiful male, was about 200 yards out in the Chesapeake Bay and was seen from the grounds of the Elms Environmental Education Center in the southern part of the county. This finding triggered an active parade of birders hoping to enjoy the bird as well as to add another species to their 2011 lists. Some were successful and some were not, and some just had to be persistent. One of the latter was Mark Johnson of Aberdeen, who demonstrated admirable commitment by trying three times. His third trip, on Jan 14, was met with success. It also turned out to be the last reported sighting of the bird.
- The mild winter may have also contributed to an early display by AMERICAN WOODCOCKS on Dec 18, the day of the Christmas Bird Count at Jug Bay. Danny Bystrak of Anne Arundel County was wrapping up his part of the count at the end of Mallard Lane when he heard a WOODCOCK doing its whole Spring routine, peenting and displaying. A few minutes later a second bird began peenting. Danny returned to the same site the next evening and again heard two WOODCOCK peenting, but they were not doing the full display while he was there.
- On Christmas Day, Levin Willey of Linkwood, Dorchester County, received the gift of a sighting of a WESTERN KINGBIRD. He was checking for waterfowl at the Hurlock Waste Water Treatment Plant; the kingbird was in the thin tree line on the eastern side of the ponds, where it seemed to be having no difficulty in finding a good supply of insects to eat. The presence of the bird was confirmed the next day at the same location by Gordon Jennings of Talbot County who joined Levin for a return visit. As a candidate for late-year addition to 2011 lists, this bird drew lots of attention. It proved to be a cooperative bird as well as a very pretty one, and though it moved around to various parts of the property, it was successfully found by many birders. The final reported sighting occurred on Jan 8.

Students, Educators: Hone Your Birding Skills

YMOS is once again offering a week-long summer program for interested youth (incoming to grades 7-12) and for educators (anyone working with young people in an educational setting). "Field Research in the World of Birds," a residential program, will be held at Washington College in Chestertown, June 24-29. Scholarship money is available. Details and applications can be found on the ymos.org web site.

Please forward this information to any persons who might be interested. The application deadline is March 31, and we'd love to have applicants from each MOS chapter.

—George Radcliffe
radclifg@gmail.com

Book Review *continued from page 20*

No matter, this new guide is in my opinion "best of show." I put it in the same class as the superb Collins/Princeton "Birds of Europe," which for my money is the finest field guide to birds yet published. The new NGS guide can and will be used to good effect by beginners, intermediates, and experts alike. And it is still not too large or heavy to fit in a vest pocket. At a street (on-line) price of less than \$20, you can afford another guide.

A birding tour de force.

—Michael Bowen
Montgomery Bird Club

LAST CALL

- ... to sign up for the **YMOS World Series of Birding team**, deadline March 1.
- ... to pledge support for the **YMOS Birdathon**, deadline March 17.
See page 3.
- ... to register for the **YMOS summer program**, deadline March 31.
See page 19.

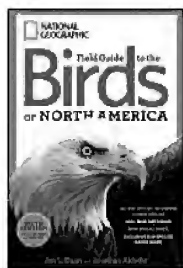
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BOOK REVIEW

National Geographic Field Guide to the Birds of North America, 6th Edition, by Jon L. Dunn and Jonathan Alderfer •
National Geographic Society, 2011.



It seems like only yesterday that I reviewed the 5th edition of this venerable guide. In fact it was four years ago (*The Maryland Yellowthroat*, January/February 2007). It would seem difficult to improve substantially on the utility of that edition, which garnered wide critical acclaim. Nevertheless, Jon Dunn and Jonathan Alderfer—at

long last given credit by the NGS as authors rather than “editors” or “consultants”—have managed to make a good thing even better. And Paul Lehman, whose maps and range information contribute so importantly to the success of this series, is given almost equal billing on the title page.

Two innovative aspects of this edition greatly improve its overall usefulness. First, the illustrations are now annotated with information (albeit in very small type) that amplifies and extends the principal text. This is an effective teaching tool and a great improvement over the simple arrows made famous by Peterson. Second, there are 37 large maps that show the breeding and wintering ranges for birds having multiple subspecies that can be identified in the field—for example, the four groups (encompassing 16 subspecies) of Fox Sparrow. Although the beginning birder might not care for this much detail, the subspecies maps are relegated to the back of the guide where they do not clutter

up the portrayal of the parent species. The authors and the map maestro have managed to distill an enormous amount of field and research knowledge into very compact maps.

Dunn and Alderfer state in the preface that the guide was redesigned to allow more room for illustrations. That is undoubtedly so, although many pages look “busier” than in previous editions, especially because of the annotations. Some birds have been redrawn, but in at least one case—Winter Wren, now split from Pacific Wren—the new image is a poorer representation of the species than the earlier version. The Chinese printer did an excellent job, and the color reproduction has more fidelity and “snap” than the somewhat faded depictions in the 5th edition.

The species “Quick Find” index is now on the front flap, where it ought to be, and the page explaining range map symbols is now on the back flap. A section treating 92 accidental and extinct species follows the main section, as it did in the 5th edition.

The taxonomic names in this new edition correspond to the latest official AOU list, which introduces many changes, especially in the case of the wood warblers, where *Dendroica* is banished forever and such new and unfamiliar names as *Geothlypis* and *Setophaga* do not roll trippingly off the tongue.

continued on page 19